

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 34-39, and amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for modifying microparticles comprising:  
providing a gelatinous carrier medium in which microparticles are embedded;  
introducing at least one component into the gelatinous carrier medium and  
bringing the at least one component into contact with the microparticles by induced,  
directional transport, with the at least one component exhibiting a mobility in the  
gelatinous carrier medium which is higher than that of the microparticles;  
modifying the microparticles with the at least one component to produce modified  
microparticles; and  
removing the modified microparticles from the gelatinous carrier medium.
2. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the gelatinous  
carrier medium is a solid gel.
3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that  
providing the gelatinous carrier medium comprises:  
providing the carrier medium in a low-viscosity form;  
introducing the microparticles into the carrier medium; and  
increasing a viscosity of the carrier medium such that mobility of the  
microparticles in the carrier medium is restricted.
4. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the viscosity of  
the carrier medium is increased by converting the carrier medium into a gelatinous state  
or into a solid gel.
5. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that  
the viscosity of the carrier medium is increased by the carrier medium undergoing a  
reversible sol-gel transition.

6. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that the carrier medium is a gel which is liquefied by heating for the purpose of introducing the microparticles and is cooled down once again, for solidification, after the microparticles have been introduced.

7. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that the carrier medium is a gel which is liquefied by adding a dispersing agent for the purpose of introducing the microparticles and the dispersing agent is at least partially removed once again, for solidification, after the microparticles have been introduced.

8. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that modifying the microparticles comprises coating the microparticles with the at least one component.

9. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that removing the modified microparticles from the gelatinous carrier medium is effected by lowering a viscosity of the carrier medium and separating off the modified microparticles from the carrier medium.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the viscosity of the carrier medium is lowered by the carrier medium undergoing a gel-sol transition.

11. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the viscosity is lowered by heating the carrier medium.

12. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the viscosity is lowered by adding a dispersing agent.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that removing the modified microparticles from the gelatinous carrier medium is effected by decomposing the carrier medium and separating off the modified microparticles from the carrier medium that is decomposed.
14. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the microparticles are smaller than 30 micrometers.
15. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the microparticles are of biological origin or bio-technological origin.
16. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the microparticles are colloidal particles.
17. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the microparticles contain an active compound.
18. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the microparticles employed are disintegratable or soluble particles.
19. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the microparticles possess catalytic properties.
20. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the at least one component comprises water-soluble organic polymers.
21. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the at least one component is used for coating the microparticles and comprises a compound selected from pharmaceutical and cosmetic active compounds.

22. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the at least one component is used for coating the microparticles and comprises at least one inorganic substance.
23. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 22, characterized in that the at least one component used for coating the microparticles comprises inorganic polyelectrolytes.
24. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 22, characterized in that the at least one component used for coating the microparticles possesses catalytic properties.
25. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the at least one component is used for coating the microparticles and comprises water-soluble organic polyelectrolytes.
26. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the at least one component is used for coating the microparticles and is of biogenic or bio-technological origin.
27. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the at least one component is used for coating the microparticles and is labeled.
28. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that modifying the microparticles includes consecutively coating the microparticles with at least two components for the purpose of forming a shell which comprises at least two layers.
29. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 28, characterized in that modifying the microparticles includes coating the microparticles with at least one further component for the purpose of forming a shell comprising at least three layers.

30. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the microparticles are hollow particles having a shell which is constructed in layers.

31. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 30, characterized in that the at least one component is introduced into the hollow particles.

32. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the carrier medium is composed of organic polymers.

33. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that after the microparticles have been modified, the carrier medium is first of all comminuted and then decomposed.

34.-39. (Cancelled)

40. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that modifying the microparticles comprises using the at least one component to disintegrate microparticles which are coated with a shell, resulting in the formation of hollow structures.

41. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that modifying the microparticles comprises introducing the at least one component into the microparticles.